

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-29 are presently active in this case. The present Amendment amends Claims 1-11, 14, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 28, and 29 to more clearly correspond to the disclosure of Figs. 1-6. These amendments, thus, include no new matter. The present Amendment also cancels Claims 20 and 24 without prejudice or disclaimer.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 20-22 and 24-27 were objected to for being dependent upon a rejected claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 19 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Iwata et al. (U.S. patent Application No. 10/431,369, hereinafter “Iwata”). Claims 1-18 and 28-29 stand allowed.

First, a typographical error was found in Claim 14 and corrected in Claim 14 as currently amended. Various informalities in Claims 1-11, 14, 15, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 28, and 29 relating to the disclosure of Figs. 1-6 have also been corrected to address possible antecedent basis problems discovered in these claims.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 1-18 and 28-29 are allowable and that Claims 20-22 and 24-27 include allowable subject matter. In light of this indication, Claim 19 has been substantively amended to include the subject matter formally stated in Claim 20 and Claim 20 has been canceled. Therefore, amended Claim 19 is believed to be allowable. Claim 21 has been amended to depend from Claim 19. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Claims 21-22 which depend from Claim 19 are also allowable.

Similarly, Claim 23 has been substantively amended to include the features stated in allowable Claim 24 and Claim 24 has been canceled. Accordingly, the dependency of Claim

Application No. 10/621,886
Reply to Office Action of August 17, 2004

25 has been amended so that Claim 25 depends from amended Claim 23. Claim 23 and 25-27 are therefore also believed to be allowable.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-19, 21-23, and 25-29 is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

Raymond F. Cardillo
Registration No. 40,440

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)